

Thursday January 21, 2010

To DCYF Supervisor & Staff,

We, Wenceslao Gonzalez Junior and Cibeles Jolivette Gonzalez, parents who retain full parental rights over our children Wenceslao Adonis Gonzalez III (1/06/05) and Galileo Basilio Gonzalez (4/02/07), are writing this letter to you to make known our displeasure at the much erroneous decision to appoint either an Educational Surrogate Parent or an Educational Advocate to our sons, and to demand that our rights as parents and as U.S. Citizens be respected and no longer trampled on.

Though you may have a certain perception of us (and a wrong one at that), your view of us does not give you the right to hinder due process or to deny us our rights.

Throughout this whole surreal-like situation our rights have been consistently violated in what can only be said is a shameful manner. There was NO investigation in Spain prior to the children's removal, and we were given almost zero information about them while we were there. We were denied a fair trial in Spain (where the removal of the children took place), our children were deported against our will and placed in the home of the person to whom both of us were strongly opposed should have custody of them.

On our arrival to the U.S. we have been confronted here (much to our dismay) by a similar pattern of civil rights violations. We have been given very little information on our children, and what little has been provided to us has almost always been of a vague nature.

We have been excluded from making any decisions on our children's well being (with the exception of vaccines), when as their birth parents we are the only ones who can honestly claim to have their true best interests at heart, as parental love (and no other motive)

influences our decisions with regard to them. To claim to have a child's best interest in mind, and then exclude from major decisions that influence that child's life those who are most qualified in all truth to make that very claim is contradictory, and shows a lack of understanding of the importance of the child-parent bond which is so crucial for the emotional health of the child. We know the image that has been propagated of us by those who have (for their own personal motives) falsely accused us. The indifference with which our statements are received, and the way in which we have been lied to, also indicate that our intelligence to your eyes is dubious, and so the validity of our judgments is looked upon with what one can only presume is a mixture of mockery and skepticism.

We have stated time and again that our children have no learning disabilities, and that what may appear in your eyes to be delay is merely the result of conditioning and trauma which has taken place after their removal from our home. We feel that the motives of our accusers, which led to our children being taken away from us without any due process should be taken into careful consideration if the desire to analyze this whole situation through an impartial scope is sincere. Our eldest son Wenceslao (though never a very talkative child) has an extraordinary ability to learn, and far from being delayed at the age of two showed remarkable intellectual capacity and talent for his age. From an early age he has shown to be gifted in writing, music, and drawing, and prior to his removal used to be in love with learning. Our youngest child Galileo could count up to three in Spanish and say two or three other words prior to his removal at the age of one and a half. We feel that it is irresponsible to place labels on such a young child, who will not even be starting school for some years.

The actions which you have proposed are for children who are struggling in school and who

have shown great difficulty with learning.

How can one say that a two and a half year needs to be in special education when school is still a distant prospect, and yet claim that such a statement is rational?

As for our eldest son's supposed inability to talk, we would like to make the following points which seem to have been overlooked:

- 1) If after over a year of separation from us, he is not only talking less but has forgotten all that he knew (which was remarkable for his age), it is more a proof of the incompetency of those that have had him after he was taken, rather than a supposed proof of any neglect on our part. We should not in any way be blamed for circumstances that have developed after they were taken out of our quite competent care.**
- 2) Even if, let's say for an example, our child was mute, that is not sufficient grounds for placing a child in special-ed, neither does it prove that he has a learning disability. A child could be mute and be brilliant. If our eldest son, who at the age of two knew what most five years olds are struggling to learn, has a learning disability, then it would be fair to say that most kids should automatically be placed in special-ed. We have known kids who have had speech therapy and yet have never been placed in special-ed.**
- 3) Our child has not yet begun school , so any belief that he will not be able to learn in school is more based on biased speculation than a careful observation of what the actual reality is. Should the hunches of a few self-important “experts” who have no real knowledge of how our son truly was prior to his removal, in order to be able to make a fair assessment, be allowed to so profoundly affect a child's life and future self-esteem?**

We fervently object to all the decisions which you have made without the slightest concern

for our dignity as parents and law-abiding citizens who have a right to a trial, without having to witness our rights stripped from us beforehand. We are tired of decisions being made behind our backs, only to be called when we are needed to blindly agree to that which we had no knowledge of beforehand. Such actions are but a pretense of legality and do not speak well of an agency that claims to serve the interests of families.

The statements that we received mention both the terms “Educational Surrogate Parent” and “ Educational Advocate” when they are two different things.

According to our understanding an Educational Surrogate Parent makes educational decisions for children in special-ed when their parents cannot be located, are deceased, have relinquished or terminated their rights, or show no interest in their child's education.

No one can link any of these circumstances to our situation.

Educational Advocates are usually hired by the parents themselves when they fall into disagreement with the decisions of the school, and even though social workers can refer a child the evaluation must be done with the parent's consent. The evaluations which are being used to foist all these labels on our sons were hastily made almost immediately after they were deported from Spain, and without our knowledge or consent. They were also made during a time period in which our sons had experienced great change and trauma. Any evaluation made while their separation from us persists will not be accurate due to the fact that traumatizing circumstances do not allow the normal behavior of a child to manifest itself, and without knowing how the child under normal circumstances truly behaves, an accurate assessment remains elusive.

Furthermore educational advocates are used for children who have behavioral, emotional,

physical, or learning disabilities , conditions that our sons thankfully do not have.

Even when educational advocacy services are provided, the parent/guardian needs to be in agreement and retains the option of terminating services at any given time.

We have stated numerous solid reasons for our present and future opposition to these decisions, but perhaps the most important reason which only serves to highlight the irony and absurdity of this situation is that few parents care about education more than we do.

In an era where intense parental involvement in childrens' education is rare (as public schools more than amply show) we created an environment for our children where learning was a way of life and a joy rather than a burden. We have spent thousands of dollars on hundreds of beautiful books to give our children an impressive library. All these books at present are in Spain. Children's books imported from other countries as well as beautiful books from the U.S. that promote positive attributes. Our sons had hundreds of DVDs that were all educational. All their toys were educational as well. All this we did with the earnest intention of giving them an excellent education based on the Bible, and complemented with the ability to know how to play musical instruments, to read and write music, to paint, and to read in several languages. Instruments in our house were a common sight. Our sons had guitars, pianos, and other types of instruments that are now in Spain. We invested in a costly computer system that teaches toddlers to play piano with the hope of beginning our eldest son on serious piano lessons as soon as he turned four. To our children, prior to their removal, praying and learning was part of their daily routine. Few parents have cared more about education or have invested as much as us in toys and books related to education. So it seems the height of irony that in addition to all the rights that have already been denied us, that we should be denied one of the rights that we are most qualified to exercise. When you consider that one of us has years of

experience tutoring children, and the other at present is working as a teacher's aide, to state that we are incapable of providing for our children's educational needs defies logic.

There is a difference between not wanting to accept erroneous decisions that we know with absolute certainty are based on a lack of awareness of what the reality is, and not caring about our children's education. Anyone who makes such a silly statement obviously does not know us and thus is not fit to pass a judgment on our abilities as a parent.

The truth is that our children are in no way thriving, but merely surviving a traumatic situation that was unnecessarily created by others. Academic excellence cannot be achieved in a setting where a child's natural G-D given abilities and gifts are not only denied but even suppressed. Academic excellence cannot be achieved when the child is not only going through a traumatic experience, but has the additional misfortune of being placed in an environment where love of learning is not promoted and even discouraged. The inefficient public school system simply cannot cope with the influx of students who come to school from homes where such environments exist, so by placing our son in such a class the only possibility is that he will learn even less.

According to our research most states do not have licensing or training requirements for educational advocates, and even those parents who really want an educational advocate have a task on their hands trying to find a reputable one. Therefore to ask us to entrust the future of our children to someone who may not only lack the know-how to make sage decisions but who can never have a realistic appreciation of our sons' gifts and attributes, and thus their true potential, is to ask us to be reckless with our most precious asset...our children.

Given the fact that appearances are but the reflections of circumstances, and that circumstances are subject to change, we feel that it is wrong to brand a child for the rest

of his life as delayed or learning disabled, because of circumstances that existed for what we hope will be only a brief period of his life. Educational freedom is founded on the principle that parents are the best suited to make important decisions regarding the care and education of their own children, because they are the only ones who can without doubt be said have a selfless and altruistic interest in their children's well being.

The Constitutional right to be a parent should be sacred as the family is the basic building block of society. Parents have rights and children have rights, but children's rights are best protected by protecting the rights of the only ones who will always have their best interests in mind... their parents.

We refuse and appeal the decisions which have been made with regard to our children's education for the reasons that we have stated in this letter. We will continue to oppose the actions proposed, and refuse to sign anything which will compromise our rights as loving parents or lead to the permanent labeling of our children and the scarring of their potential.

Sincerely,

Wenceslao Gonzalez Jr.

Cibeles Jolivette Gonzalez
